We've decided to rename Riot (riot.im)

316 points by anotherevan 17 hours ago | hide | past | web | favorite | 183 comments

add comment

gorgoiler 14 hours ago [–]

This is welcomed. Matrix is very cool. However, the lack of *Matrix* branding in clients always felt like unnecessary self hobbling.

I get that the environment is heterogeneous. It just felt a bit too lacking in clear branding compared to something like Signal.

"Is that Matrix?"

"Yes! Although technically matrix is the protocol. This is FluffyChat connected to my local HackerSpace's Matrix instance."

reply

Arathorn 13 hours ago [–]

To be clear: Riot's new name is not going to use the word Matrix - any more than Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Edge etc use the word "Web". Riot is just one client for Matrix, and it'd be completely unfair if it tried to hijack the name Matrix for its own purposes - and I'd hope that the Matrix.org Foundation would take steps to stop such a thing from happening.

So I'm afraid the whole "Is that Matrix?", "Yes, I'm using FluffyChat/Riot/Whatever to connect to Matrix" conversation is still going to be there. Just like someone might say "ooh, what Web Browser is that?". This much is a feature, not a bug.

reply

skrebbel 12 hours ago [–]

That seems like a missed opportunity. If you're renaming anyway, why not make it easier for people to understand what's going on?

I mean I don't think the browser analogy is that great, it seems more the exception than the rule. Eg most IRC clients have the word IRC in them, or something very close (eg mIRC, irssi, etc). Most email clients have the word "mail" in them. Torrent clients, same. Why shouldn't a Matrix client have the word Matrix in it?

Just call it iMatrix or uMatrix or something like that, and you're removing a lot of confusion. If mIRC and uTorrent and Gmail can get away with that, so can you.

reply

toast0 9 hours ago [–]

If there's a class of Matrix clients, naming one of the Matrix is more confusing than not. Probably call it Spoon, or Kung-Fu (as in "I know Kung-Fu"), but probably not LotsOfGuns.

reply

dependenttypes 10 hours ago [–]

> Most email clients have the word "mail" in them

Such as thunderbird, icedove, mutt, gnus, mew, outlook, outlook express, etc?

reply

quicklime 9 hours ago [–]

Most of those are very niche products. The big mail clients are: Gmail, hotmail, yahoo mail, Apple's "Mail". Outlook is really the only outlier.

reply

sudosysgen 9 hours ago [–]

Thunderbird is absolutely not niche.

Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo Mail are email services first and foremost. Most native clients do not have mail in the name.

reply

jacobr1 9 hours ago [–]

At this point, probably most (non-mobile) native clients other Outlook probably can be considered niche. For consumer email, webmail has won.

reply

Macha 3 hours ago [–]

Is Yahoo Mail or Apple Mail really that different to Foobar Matrix Client (shortened to Foobar)?

reply

marcosdumay 9 hours ago [–]

I guess the better point would be that they used to have, when email wasn't as widespread as it is today.

reply

opan 9 hours ago [–]

Most IRC clients? Weechat, Hexchat, Quassel, Konversation. Torrent clients? Transmission, Deluge, Vuze. I padded my lists a little, but I really do think "most" is an extreme and strange claim here. Weechat and Hexchat are the most-used IRC clients among people I know, just as Transmission and Deluge are the most popular bittorrent clients among people I know. irssi and rtorrent are also pretty popular, but it's no less common for things with names seemingly unrelated to their protocol to be used.

reply

GTP 9 hours ago [–]

Ok, maybe this doesn't apply to most clients, but I think op still has a point. If there are at least some email clients with the word "mail" in their name and at least some torrent clients with the name torrent in their name why shouldn't riot use the word "matrix" inside it's name? It's not that they must, but like op said it would make things clearer, in my opinion something like MatrixChat would be OK.

reply

fauigerzigerk 11 hours ago [–]

>Most email clients have the word "mail" in them.

Yes, but mail isn't the same as SMTP or IMAP or POP.

reply

majewsky 11 hours ago [–]

When I speak about email, I don't say "I'm sending you an SMTP message". I say "I'm sending you an email (message)". For all intents and purposes (besides writing code involving these protocols), the name of the protocol is "email".

In public communication, it almost never helps to start a sentence with "well, technically".

reply

fauigerzigerk 10 hours ago [–]

What I mean is that "mail" was a thing before email protocols existed. "Mail" and even "email" has meaning beyond any specific technology.

The name told you what you could expect the technology to do. That's why it made sense to include these words in the name of email clients.

The same is not true for "Matrix".

reply

jacobr1 9 hours ago [–]

What is the equivalent? One of these: instant messaging, group messaging, teamware, groupware, team chat, group chat ... ?

Chat seems to be closest?

So MatrixChat might work?

Genuinely asking.

reply

derefr 8 hours ago [–]

> I don't say "I'm sending you an SMTP message". I say "I'm sending you an email (message)".

Well, that's only sensible—you're *not* sending an SMTP message. SMTP isn't a message format. It's a wire protocol for passing along pre-formatted messages. What you're sending is a *MIME* message, *over* SMTP. (Just like you send HTML *over* HTTP.)

The distinction is even clearer in the email case, actually, because those same MIME messages also show up in other transfer protocols (POP, IMAP.)

There *are* actually a few email clients that use "MIME" in their names. But it's pretty rare.

Conveniently, though, "MIME" is short for "Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions", so "Mail" *is* actually in the name. ;)

reply

fivre 10 hours ago [–]

Oh boy, just wait til you see how many protocols make up an IPSec implementation :)

Those get named after the overall framework (if they're not just named "fooVPN" or simply "foo") even though there's no single IPSec protocol, and many many different underlying protocols.

reply

MR4D 2 hours ago [–]

My vote is for “RMatrix”.

In English, the R makes for a good pun.

reply

balladeer 9 hours ago [–]

Indeed. This is going to be one of the maany missed opportunities by Matrix in a series of missed opportunities. Just call it Matrix Web/Mobile/Desktop.

reply

bhauer 13 hours ago [–]

Indeed. I hope the name is somehow related to Matrix, however, so that the connection is a bit more obvious. Perhaps *Transform* or *Neo*.

reply

Arathorn 12 hours ago [–]

Tragically most of those names have gone (e.g. https://matrix.org/docs/projects/server/transform) - and in the case of Neo, have gone many times over: https://matrix.org/docs/projects/client/neo, https://matrix.org/docs/projects/client/nio, https://matrix.org/docs/projects/sdk/matrix-nio, etc :D

reply

Markoff 12 hours ago [–]

that's no reason why it could not be again reused

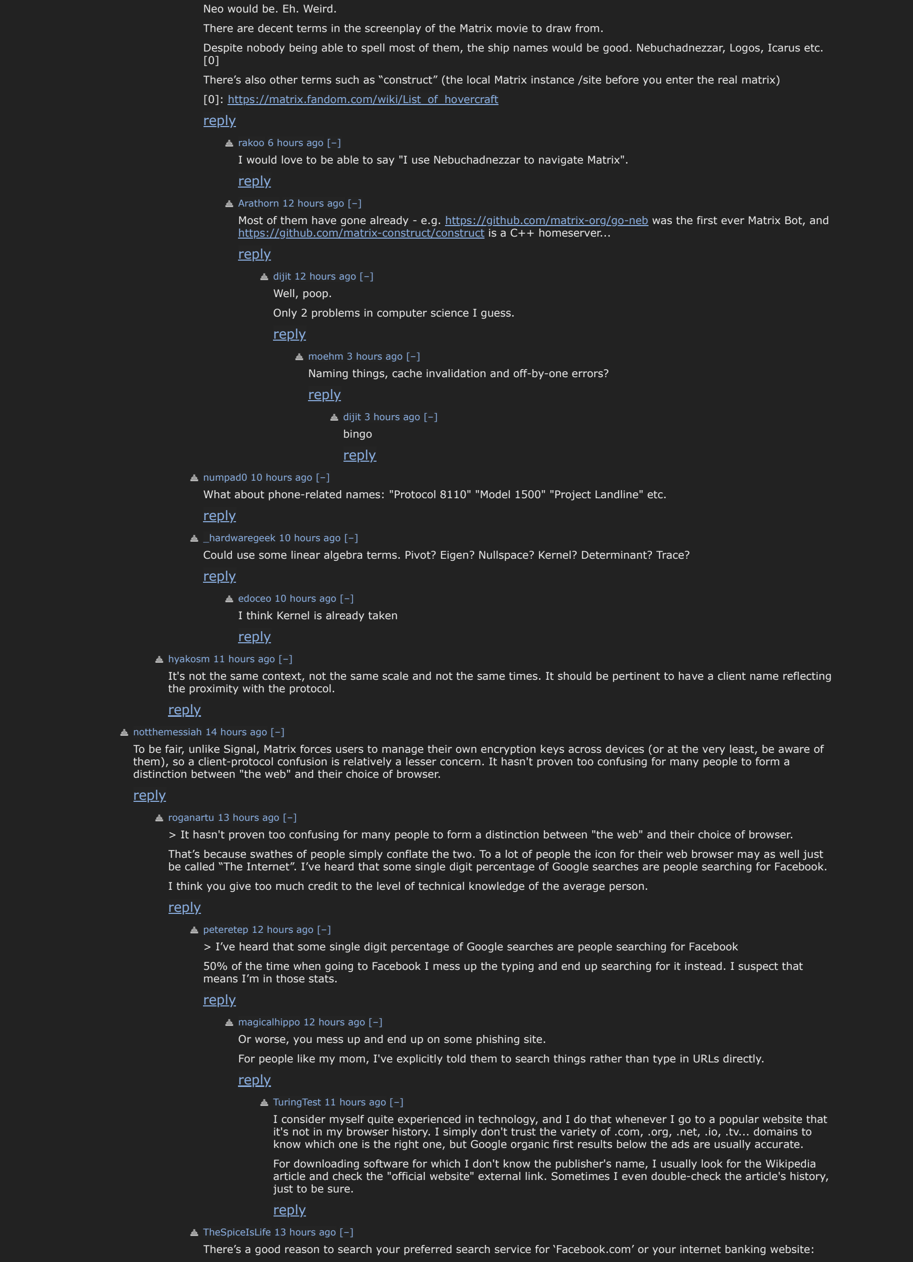
reply

opan 9 hours ago [–]

Name collision in general is not good, but also in this specific case they've had issues being confused with the game company called Riot, so I can't imagine they would want to go with an already-used name again if they could help it.

reply

dijit 12 hours ago [–]



Neo would be. Eh. Weird.

There are decent terms in the screenplay of the Matrix movie to draw from.

Despite nobody being able to spell most of them, the ship names would be good. Nebuchadnezzar, Logos, Icarus etc. [0]

There’s also other terms such as “construct” (the local Matrix instance /site before you enter the real matrix)

[0]: https://matrix.fandom.com/wiki/List_of_hovercraft

reply

rakoo 6 hours ago [–]

I would love to be able to say "I use Nebuchadnezzar to navigate Matrix".

reply

Arathorn 12 hours ago [–]

Most of them have gone already - e.g. https://github.com/matrix-org/go-neb was the first ever Matrix Bot, and https://github.com/matrix-construct/construct is a C++ homeserver...

reply

dijit 12 hours ago [–]

Well, poop.

Only 2 problems in computer science I guess.

reply

moehm 3 hours ago [–]

Naming things, cache invalidation and off-by-one errors?

reply

dijit 3 hours ago [–]

bingo

reply

numpad0 10 hours ago [–]

What about phone-related names: "Protocol 8110" "Model 1500" "Project Landline" etc.

reply

_hardwaregeek 10 hours ago [–]

Could use some linear algebra terms. Pivot? Eigen? Nullspace? Kernel? Determinant? Trace?

reply

edoceo 10 hours ago [–]

I think Kernel is already taken

reply

hyakosm 11 hours ago [–]

It's not the same context, not the same scale and not the same times. It should be pertinent to have a client name reflecting the proximity with the protocol.

reply

notthemessiah 14 hours ago [–]

To be fair, unlike Signal, Matrix forces users to manage their own encryption keys across devices (or at the very least, be aware of them), so a client-protocol confusion is relatively a lesser concern. It hasn't proven too confusing for many people to form a distinction between "the web" and their choice of browser.

reply

roganartu 13 hours ago [–]

> It hasn't proven too confusing for many people to form a distinction between "the web" and their choice of browser.

That’s because swathes of people simply conflate the two. To a lot of people the icon for their web browser may as well just be called “The Internet”. I’ve heard that some single digit percentage of Google searches are people searching for Facebook.

I think you give too much credit to the level of technical knowledge of the average person.

reply

peteretep 12 hours ago [–]

> I’ve heard that some single digit percentage of Google searches are people searching for Facebook

50% of the time when going to Facebook I mess up the typing and end up searching for it instead. I suspect that means I’m in those stats.

reply

magicalhippo 12 hours ago [–]

Or worse, you mess up and end up on some phishing site.

For people like my mom, I've explicitly told them to search things rather than type in URLs directly.

reply

TuringTest 11 hours ago [–]

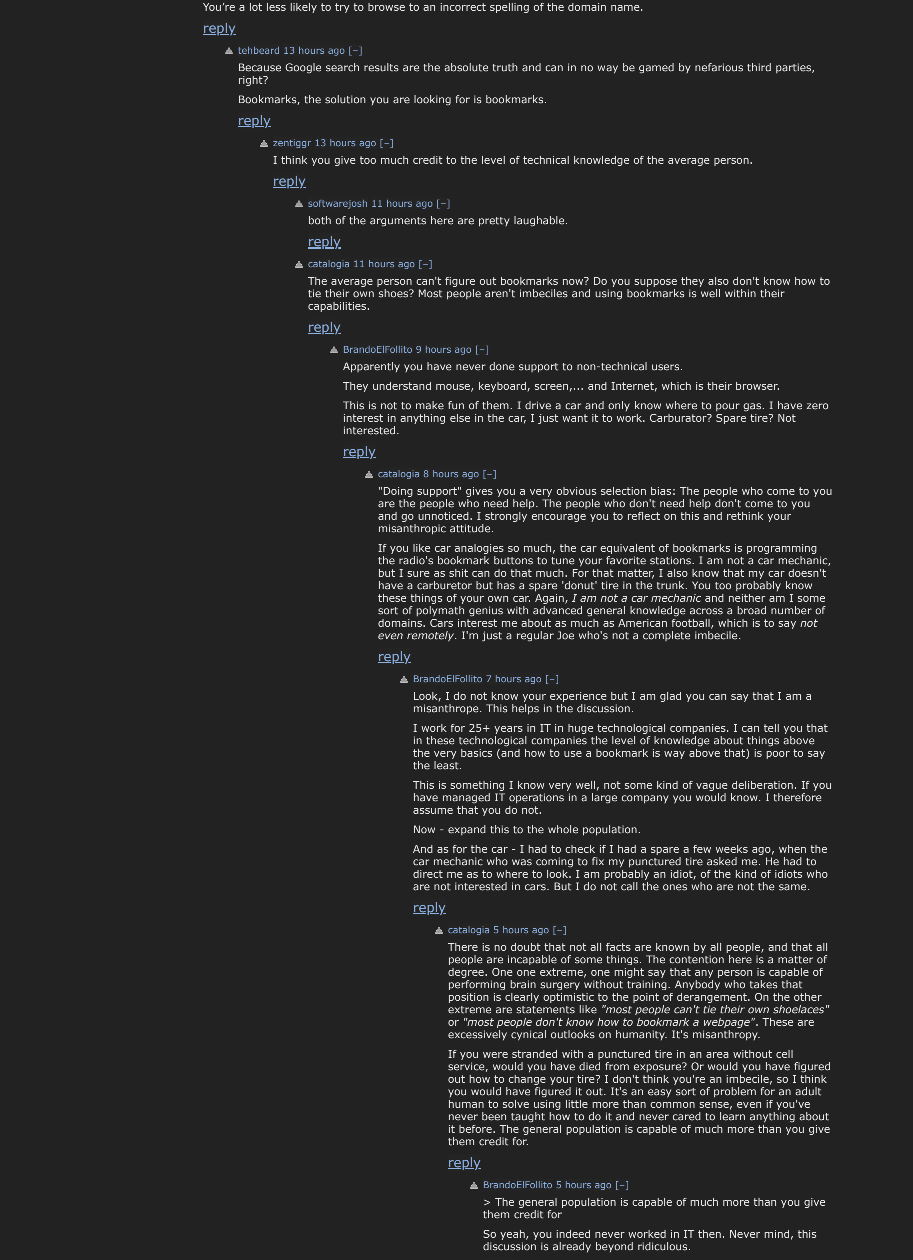
I consider myself quite experienced in technology, and I do that whenever I go to a popular website that it's not in my browser history. I simply don't trust the variety of .com, .org, .net, .io, .tv... domains to know which one is the right one, but Google organic first results below the ads are usually accurate.

For downloading software for which I don't know the publisher's name, I usually look for the Wikipedia article and check the "official website" external link. Sometimes I even double-check the article's history, just to be sure.

reply

TheSpiceIsLife 13 hours ago [–]

There’s a good reason to search your preferred search service for ‘Facebook.com’ or your internet banking website:



You're a lot less likely to try to browse to an incorrect spelling of the domain name.

reply

tehbeard 13 hours ago [–]

Because Google search results are the absolute truth and can in no way be gamed by nefarious third parties, right?

Bookmarks, the solution you are looking for is bookmarks.

reply

zentiggr 13 hours ago [–]

I think you give too much credit to the level of technical knowledge of the average person.

reply

softwarejosh 11 hours ago [–]

both of the arguments here are pretty laughable.

reply

catalogia 11 hours ago [–]

The average person can't figure out bookmarks now? Do you suppose they also don't know how to tie their own shoes? Most people aren't imbeciles and using bookmarks is well within their capabilities.

reply

BrandoElFollito 9 hours ago [–]

Apparently you have never done support to non-technical users.

They understand mouse, keyboard, screen,... and Internet, which is their browser.

This is not to make fun of them. I drive a car and only know where to pour gas. I have zero interest in anything else in the car, I just want it to work. Carburator? Spare tire? Not interested.

reply

catalogia 8 hours ago [–]

"Doing support" gives you a very obvious selection bias: The people who come to you are the people who need help. The people who don't need help don't come to you and go unnoticed. I strongly encourage you to reflect on this and rethink your misanthropic attitude.

If you like car analogies so much, the car equivalent of bookmarks is programming the radio's bookmark buttons to tune your favorite stations. I am not a car mechanic, but I sure as shit can do that much. For that matter, I also know that my car doesn't have a carburetor but has a spare 'donut' tire in the trunk. You too probably know these things of your own car. Again, *I am not a car mechanic* and neither am I some sort of polymath genius with advanced general knowledge across a broad number of domains. Cars interest me about as much as American football, which is to say *not even remotely*. I'm just a regular Joe who's not a complete imbecile.

reply

BrandoElFollito 7 hours ago [–]

Look, I do not know your experience but I am glad you can say that I am a misanthrope. This helps in the discussion.

I work for 25+ years in IT in huge technological companies. I can tell you that in these technological companies the level of knowledge about things above the very basics (and how to use a bookmark is way above that) is poor to say the least.

This is something I know very well, not some kind of vague deliberation. If you have managed IT operations in a large company you would know. I therefore assume that you do not.

Now - expand this to the whole population.

And as for the car - I had to check if I had a spare a few weeks ago, when the car mechanic who was coming to fix my punctured tire asked me. He had to direct me as to where to look. I am probably an idiot, of the kind of idiots who are not interested in cars. But I do not call the ones who are not the same.

reply

catalogia 5 hours ago [–]

There is no doubt that not all facts are known by all people, and that all people are incapable of some things. The contention here is a matter of degree. One one extreme, one might say that any person is capable of performing brain surgery without training. Anybody who takes that position is clearly optimistic to the point of derangement. On the other extreme are statements like *"most people can't tie their own shoelaces"* or *"most people don't know how to bookmark a webpage"*. These are excessively cynical outlooks on humanity. It's misanthropy.

If you were stranded with a punctured tire in an area without cell service, would you have died from exposure? Or would you have figured out how to change your tire? I don't think you're an imbecile, so I think you would have figured it out. It's an easy sort of problem for an adult human to solve using little more than common sense, even if you've never been taught how to do it and never cared to learn anything about it before. The general population is capable of much more than you give them credit for.

reply

BrandoElFollito 5 hours ago [–]

> The general population is capable of much more than you give them credit for

So yeah, you indeed never worked in IT then. Never mind, this discussion is already beyond ridiculous.

reply

catalogia 2 hours ago [–]

Reflect on what I said about selection bias.

reply

squeaky-clean 10 hours ago [–]

A lot of people who are not particularly computer literate do not really grasp the difference between the web, the browser, and the search engine. Generally it's all just "the google" or similar. At least from my limited tech support experience.

reply

throwaway1997 14 hours ago [–]

This is welcome news. Some groups in Hong Kong have been considering it as an alternative to Telegram but the name has been discouraging as in this climate it could be used as evidence against anyone involved in protesting activity.

Hope the new name is either more abstract or closely aligned to what the software actually does.

reply

tweetle_beetle 14 hours ago [–]

The name of the mobile app is *Riot.im*. If that in itself is enough to be used as evidence against an innocent person, then the party doing the accusing is clearly comfortable with much more underhand techniques and it hardly matters.

Some lazily searched synonyms for groups of people which would fit the criteria of being *more closely aligned* include:

pack, mob, crowd, crew, gathering, rabble, syndicate, family, gang

Most of those have some negative connotations in the right (or should that be wrong) context. It's depressing to think about a chilling-esque effect on something as mundane as a chat app name.

reply

marcinzm 14 hours ago [–]

If a country has a jury system then it's not just about the authorities but their ability to convince people. A random juror will sure find someone having an app named "Riot" as indicating that they wanted to participate in a riot. In practice, that means the defendant needs to provide proof that the app is innocent rather than the prosecutor providing proof that it's not.

reply

throwaway1997 14 hours ago [–]

I guess you are lucky that you don't live here then. At the moment, just seeing the Telegram icon on the home screen will result in police scrutinising you more. Having something called "Riot" on your phone when people are currently being accused of Rioting for just being in the wrong place at the wrong time is just a liability. This is especially true with the new National Security Law which is being past imminently now.

reply

tweetle_beetle 12 hours ago [–]

I completely understand your point. I just can't imagine a scenario where some state authority takes the time to look at your phone and then:

- gives you a bad time if they see the word *Riot.im* on your phone

- or, lets you go about your business if they don't, or sees *[generic chat app name]*

If someone is intent on abusing their authority, then they will abuse it. There's no reason *[generic chat app name]* won't become the new "evidence" for tomorrow's abusers, even if it does accurately describe the app's function.

I appreciate the argument about not giving them cause to abuse their authority. But, as you say, if simply standing in the wrong place at the wrong time is enough cause, then it is completely impossible to stay safe by keeping a low profile. The system has been designed to give citizens little control and blur the lines of criminality.

edit I want to clarify that I don't want anyone to suffer, especially over something as mundane as an app name. The realist in me is happy for any measures to prevent abuse to happen. The idealist in me finds it disheartening that the motivations of abusive regimes and cynical legal systems even have to be given a moment's thought.

reply

fauigerzigerk 11 hours ago [–]

Protests are always a battle for the hearts and minds of the general public. Accusing protesters of violence, painting them as criminals as opposed to citizens exercising their rights, is absolutely key to justifying any crackdown.

Symbolism matters. The tongue in cheeck nature of a name such as Riot can easily get lost or deliberately mischaracterised in a heated propaganda battle.

When authorities decide whether or not to ban an app, it matters what the main purpose of the app is, and it matters what the broader public belives its purpose is.

Using an app called Riot is simply unhelpful if you're constantly defending yourself against accusations of rioting.

reply

jacobr1 9 hours ago [–]

You are presuming everyone is acting in good faith. In interpersonal communication presume good intent and best efforts. But with media, war and politics, presume bad-faith and self-interest.

reply

Quiark 11 hours ago [–]

We're talking about a city where a woman was convicted for attacking police officer with her breast.

reply

throwaway1997 11 hours ago [–]

Yes but life isn't all or nothing. One can choose to reduce their risk and one of the ways to do this is not use an app called "Riot".

reply

6510 12 hours ago [–]

vict.im ?

reply

singhrac 14 hours ago [–]

It's not about evidence, per se, but about normalization. People from all walks of life might find a need for it in HK, and it's easier to convince someone to download an app they haven't heard of if it's called "Messages" or something than "Riot".

I mean, branding matters. Discord has one of the best voice chat implementations, but asking my coworkers to use it feels a bit iffy just because it has gaming-focused branding.

reply

▲ tweetle_beetle 11 hours ago [–]

Branding does matter, but doesn't your example demonstrate the opposite point - overall brand experience is more important than a name?

Riot.im's potential brand association with the act of rioting stops with the name. There is no other reference to riots, or rioting, and violence is not a core part of the brand identity. There is no rioting community that it is appealing to, or normalising.

Discord actively affiliates itself with the gaming community in all aspects of its branding. The gaming community happily embraces it despite the (universally?) negative connotations of the name. You said that you would feel iffy about recommending the app because of the gaming-focused branding, rather than the name.

I get that this is a bit pedantic, after all the decision has been made and Vector, Matrix, etc. are all fine by me anyway. I'm all for changing insensitive, inappropriate names where they refer to specific cultural/historical events/figures which society feels should no longer be celebrated. But in my opinion this is much more superficial.

reply

▲ TheSpiceIsLife 13 hours ago [–]

The word *discord* itself means:

disagreement between people

Even *Facebook* didn’t get their brand that wrong.

reply

▲ throwaway1997 11 hours ago [–]

My argument is nothing to do with political correctness or the current cancel culture, which I shall not express an opinion on.

I'm just saying that if I am arrested and at the trial it is stated that "xyz has an app called Riot which she used for coordinating illegal gatherings", some people in the jury may understand this as proof of intent. This is especially true in a multilingual society where the app name will be translated into Chinese for the benefit of the jury.

This is why I would not use an app called Riot in Hong Kong. If you are unable to understand or emphasize with our situation then you will indeed keep arguing against me and there's nothing I can say to convince you.

reply

▲ smt88 13 hours ago [–]

This is the first I've seen branding considerations described as "chilling".

Your definition of that word seems absurdly broad. Is it "chilling" that Coca-Cola can't name a soda "Rebel Red" because it would remind people of the Confederacy?

Or is it just that brands have to be pretty tame and appeal to the lowest common denominator, and issues of free speech are secondary to people *actually liking* the brand?

Who is trying to make ideological points through their brand anyway? And what point is "Riot.im" making that society is now losing?

reply

▲ bdcravens 11 hours ago [–]

Companies pour a lot of time into naming, colors, numbers, etc - all of which have various meanings in different culture and evoke various feelings.

reply

▲ smt88 10 hours ago [–]

I don't know what that has to do with my comment. It seems like you agree with me.

My point was just that choosing a universally inoffensive name is a very common and practical part of branding.

reply

▲ igammarays 10 hours ago [–]

Uh, names matter.

reply

▲ GekkePrutser 14 hours ago [–]

Good! I always thought it was a stupid name as it was associated with violence. I would mostly view the term in a negative light.
Why use it for an app you're proud of?

I would object to it being called Matrix though as it's only one of the many Matrix clients. It's already becoming too major IMO :)
This is probably a result of most Matrix development being done by Modular, but it should remain a multi-client network as that's one of its strengths.

They already called it Vector before, not sure what was wrong with that. Was a much better name IMO. Strong link with the name of the Matrix network.

Anyway I wonder what the new name is.

reply

▲ toyg 14 hours ago [–]

> *I would object to it being called Matrix though*

Something like MatrixClient though...?

reply

▲ myself248 12 hours ago [–]

Just call it Rix.

Shares the first two letters with "Riot". Make some funny "crossed out the "ot" with an "x"" logos for the transition.

reply

▲ enz 8 hours ago [–]

Rix is like "rixe", which means something similar to "riot" in French.

reply

▲ majewsky 11 hours ago [–]

The ad campaign for the new easier UI practically writes itself: "Come home to simple Rix."

reply

▲ toyg 10 hours ago [–]

Dan Harmon and Justin Roiland are clued up enough on tech that you might even get an endorsing short with R&M.

reply

▲ djsumdog 11 hours ago [–]

That's a great name idea. I like it.

reply

▲ babolivier 14 hours ago [–]

https://twitter.com/RiotChat/status/1275364340573634560

reply

▲ GekkePrutser 10 hours ago [–]

Thanks, great to see they feel that way too!

reply

▲ Jolter 14 hours ago [–]

Too far in the other direction -- too generic. Not catchy at all and could easily be confused with other Matrix clients.

reply

▲ sildur 12 hours ago [–]

Matrix Messenger

reply

▲ whoopdedo 12 hours ago [–]

MCQ

reply

▲ toyg 12 hours ago [–]

Midgin

reply

▲ Markoff 12 hours ago [–]

there are many matrix messengers, that's like renaming Outlook to Email client

reply

▲ 6510 12 hours ago [–]

Inlook, no wait Imlook! wait... nevermind...

reply

▲ ta17711771 11 hours ago [–]

But...that's what it is, in Windows 10, essentially...

Also, they can have the "most obvious" name, because they were first, and set the standards - literally.

reply

▲ e12e 11 hours ago [–]

Actually, windows 10 has a built in mail client, that I think is called... Mail ?

reply

▲ ape4 12 hours ago [–]

Vector is super generic, not so great. Its also think of Mathy which may scare some people off.

reply

▲ GekkePrutser 10 hours ago [–]

Yeah but consider other brands that are mainstream now. They sound kind of stupid too..

I mean.. Google? Yahoo? Go Daddy? Duck Duck Go?

Really I wonder how these made it past initial adoption sometimes :) I think the name is not so important as long as it doesn't have a negative context. It's more about the overall brand identity. And now they're household names.

reply

▲ 14 10 hours ago [–]

When I hear riot usually the first thing that comes to my mind is a “riot of colors”.

reply

▲ AnonC 8 hours ago [–]

> However, we are extremely confident that now is the right time to fix the name. We’re in the process of landing gigantic improvements to Riot’s user experience and usability which will unrecognisably improve the app. So unrecognisably, in fact, that we can shed our skin and celebrate our long-awaited transition into being a truly mainstream-usable app.

I can’t wait to see what they come up with on the name and the improvements in the user experience. I don’t know anyone in my circles using Riot/Matrix, and I’ve been hesitant to push it aggressively because the UI on mobile isn’t that great compared to the more popular apps. In some ways, this will be good riddance to the phone number based centralized platforms.

reply

▲ mikece 14 hours ago [–]

Do they have a new name or was the purpose of this announcement so The Deciders can review suggestions on Hacker News and decide which is the best name for the project going forward? :-)

I think this is very good news: it strikes me that the platform is maturing to the point that it's going to be around for a very, very long time and having a "good name" is part of that. Along with OBS it seems that the app soon to be formerly known as Riot/Matrix became a critical tool during the quarantine and will be even more so if there's an encore quarantine this fall or winter.

reply

buboard 14 hours ago [–]

What is OBS used for?

reply

sk0g 14 hours ago [–]

If it's Open Broadcasting Studio, streaming or desktop recording, mainly.

reply

chungy 11 hours ago [–]

I didn't know what "certain large games company" prevented a trademark on Riot. A Wikipedia search seems to suggest this company is large (I haven't heard of them, tbh): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riot_Games

I'm curious what name they have or will pick. I've been using Riot for around a year now, it's great!

reply

thatguy0900 11 hours ago [–]

Riot makes league of legends, the biggest esport game in the world for quite a while now. They're a giant company, getting into a legal battle with them would not be fun

reply

sudosysgen 11 hours ago [–]

Riot is absolutely huge. It's estimated to be worth around 20 billion dollars.

reply

notatoad 10 hours ago [–]

riot is huge and video games is a huge market for instant messengers - there's a lot of overlap there. i'm honestly surprised that it hasn't gone beyond riot games blocking riot.im's trademark applications and progressed to riot games suing for trademark violation.

reply

detaro 17 hours ago [–]

It'd be funny if they went back to its original name, "vector", which IMHO wasn't too bad.

reply

Arathorn 13 hours ago [–]

So, we're not going to go back to Vector (although it has a very special place in our hearts :). It was a great name for a techie-focused comms client (and I'm not surprised HN likes the name :D), but feedback was pretty unanimous that it was too techie for a more general-purpose audience.

Also, heads up that we consciously did *not* optimise for a made-up name like WhatsApp or similar. Just as Matrix (and Riot, for that matter) has ended up with high search engine scores, we believe the project is strong enough to support us borrowing an existing dictionary word. If nothing else, it'd be consistent with Matrix ;P

So, apologies in advance to anyone who's hoping Riot will end up being called Sporkle or Vroomio or Flibblr... :)

reply

mckirk 9 hours ago [–]

What about 'Eigen'? There only seems to be a C++ library of that name yet, so not too much overlap. And I like its nerdy implication of 'yes, we are only one Matrix client, but we strive to be an important one' ;)

reply

Arathorn 9 hours ago [–]

Eigen is a cool name, but very geeky, and we actually know the folks at https://eigentech.com who might object a little if we borrowed the name ;)

reply

vorpalhex 12 hours ago [–]

Sporkle 2.0: Glitter Edition

reply

kawfey 13 hours ago [–]

ITT: people who disagree because searches for "vector" and "matrix" is going to be overly encumbered with mathematical references because they don't understand how SEO works.

Only a single search engine hit on the first page resolves in the mathematical definition of matrix. The others include the movie franchise, a hair products company, several dictionary pages, a computer warehouse, a vehicle tracking device, and several other non-math refrences to the word matrix. On google, riot.im shows up at #26 for me.

reply

Markoff 12 hours ago [–]

then just add messenger, same as Signal does it - Vector messenger or Neo messenger

reply

GekkePrutser 14 hours ago [–]

Yeah it was an excellent name. Strong link with the "matrix" network and no weird associations with violence like Riot.

I always assumed it was some trademark crap that made them drop the name Vector but I don't think they ever communicated the reason. It's very hard to find some name that's not trademarked by someone somewhere, or even a close resemblance to it.

Consider the eelo Android distribution, they had to change because one tiny consulting company had a trademark for something resembling it (not even the same name, and not the same industry at all!)

reply

notthemessiah 14 hours ago [–]

No, both Vector and Matrix are terms too widely used in computing to be considered good names, makes it harder to search for without getting results about linear algebra. A better name would be something unique (or at the very least orthogonal to anything directly computer-related) in some way.

reply

kawfey 13 hours ago [–]

https://vector.im/

Vector.im already seems to be the parent organization of Riot.im, so it might be confusing.

reply

detaro 13 hours ago [–]

Ah right, they took the "vector" brand for the company after they renamed the client, forgot about that.

reply

throwaway1997 14 hours ago [–]

That's actually a good name

reply

CodeGlitch 14 hours ago [–]

Please no. It's not unique enough for a Google search. There's a reason all the major brands are unusual or made up names.

reply

kawfey 13 hours ago [–]

Apple.

Ring.

Amazon.

The irony is that a google search for Vector first comes up with Vector Marketing, which sells Cutco Knives.

reply

djsumdog 11 hours ago [–]

> Cutco Knives

God I remember that shitty company. They recruit University students to sell their knives to their friends and family. They're not really good knives either, just slightly better than most store knives and sold at a markup near that of really high end commercial knives.

reply

Twisell 14 hours ago [–]

That's an awfull name as it is used all over the place in technical documentation. As soon as you'll look for help in a search engine you'd get bazillion of unrelated results.

If you founded you company in the 1980's for sure you can choose any good sounding name, even a very common fruit and it willl be alright.

But in 2020 please don't hurt the community of devellopers that deal with graphical element by reverting to such a generic random name...

reply

kawfey 13 hours ago [–]

I mentioned in another comment, Vector Marketing firmly holds the top spot in a google search for "vector".

Even if the Deciders called it Vector.im or Vector Messenger, and did some SEO, it wouldn't be that hard to find.

In fact Riot.im shows up at #8 on DDG and #6 on Google (for me) when "riot" is searched, even when "riot" is a very hyped up search term. (https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?q=riot)

reply

japaget 12 hours ago [–]

Another definition for vector is "an organism that transmits a disease". Perhaps this is not the best choice of name during a worldwide pandemic.

reply

Arathorn 12 hours ago [–]

Ironically that was the pun we were making back in 2015 when Riot used to be called Vector. Not only is a Matrix made up of Vectors, but also Vector would be the vehicle for virally spreading Matrix throughout the internet :D

Agreed it's not the best parallel to draw these days, though...

reply

GekkePrutser 10 hours ago [–]

I still think Vector was a great name for a Matrix client. I don't think it would put off non-techies really, but I'm looking forward to seeing what you're coming up with!

reply

clarry 15 hours ago [–]

So it isn't even renamed yet. This is news about upcoming news...

reply

aloisdg 15 hours ago [–]

> The new name will be announced in a few weeks once we’re ready, but we wanted to give everyone a heads up so it doesn’t come as a shock.

Feel transparent and understandable. I am fine with a teasing like this.

reply

CodeGlitch 14 hours ago [–]

Did you read the article? They state why they are announcing news about upcoming news.

reply

carapace 12 hours ago [–]

This is a good way to do it, very upfront, no surprises.

reply

sandGorgon 12 hours ago [–]

Thank you ! This is exactly what I wrote about a year back

https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=18760179

Matrix/riot/modular has the potential to be hugely disruptive. This was much needed.

reply

thereyougo 13 hours ago [–]

Without a strong and supportive community, renaming a company is hard. Riot is in a place when they can afford doing it (not money wise... community wise) Good project, I'm curious to know what the new name will be

reply

ekianjo 15 hours ago [–]

Probably a good move as the whole Matrix ecosystem has just too many names for its own good.

reply

jojobas 14 hours ago [–]

Think of email - there's Postfix, Sendmail, Exchange, Dovecot, Thunderbird, Mutt, Pine, Outlook, TheBat and many more, and nobody died over it.

Matrix should aim at becoming the email of IM and video calls, by being somewhat less obscure than XMPP. Skype and Telegram should die like Microsoft Mail and Compuserve.

reply

edwinbalani 14 hours ago [–]

That said, "email" — "electronic mail" — pretty clearly conveys in its name what it's about.

If I hear the word "matrix" out of context I'm probably going to think of mathematics or material science or something else first. In other words, "matrix" is already an overloaded term, and its other meanings aren't going to go away any time soon.

reply

tracker1 12 hours ago [–]

Now "email" is synonymous with "Internet E-mail over SMTP" which was not always the case by any stretch of the imagination.

It used to be there were many systems/protocols and even self-hosted in isolation email systems and bulletin boards. Some still operate to this day, though mostly delivered over the internet, but through different channels than general SMTP internet email.

---

That said, email is a better term than matrix, but any other term still wouldn't be the same meaning... "matrix protocol" vs "smtp" might be more narrow/accurate.

reply

Markoff 12 hours ago [–]

most of the world not speaking English use loan word "email" despite having no clue it has something to do with electronic mail in English

reply

ekianjo 14 hours ago [–]

> Think of email - there's Postfix, Sendmail, Exchange, Dovecot, Thunderbird, Mutt, Pine, Outlook, TheBat and many more, and nobody died over it.

for the end user it's just an "email client" - the problem with Matrix is that people referred to Riot as Riot being the network instead of Matrix, as Riot was the main client implementation (there are more, of course, but typically less mature).

Even the Riot app page says "Decentralised, encrypted chat & collaboration powered by [matrix]" - it's not powered by Matrix, it connects to Matrix instances. The way it's described is confusing.

reply

eyerony 12 hours ago [–]

> email client

I hear a lot of "my email", as in "I opened up my email" or "where's my email?" Sure they could mean their email inbox, but they also mean the email client with that phrase, and don't differentiate the two at all. Much like how a web browser is still, to many (most?) people, "the Internet" (or "my Internet", as in "I clicked on my Internet").

reply

A4ET8a8uTh0 14 hours ago [–]

I have to ask. Why Telegram specifically? I was under impression it is comparable to Signal.

reply

thekyle 12 hours ago [–]

Telegram is pretty bad from a privacy point of view. Only secret chats are end to end encrypted, everything else is sent in plaintext. Even if you do use secret chats they rolled their own crypto and their algorithm is controversial in the security community.

Both Signal and WhatsApp are much better if privacy is a priority for you.

reply

emptysongglass 11 hours ago [–]

It's ok to espouse your dislike for something but please do it correctly: "everything else" is *not* sent in plaintext. "Everything else" is encrypted to the server.

reply

thekyle 9 hours ago [–]

I don't think I said anything that was factually incorrect. If you read the Telegram FAQ they say that secret chats are end-to-end encrypted and regular chats are only client to server encrypted. That means the plain text of your messages is accessible to the server by default. Anyone with access to the servers including Telegram employees, governments, and cyber criminals can read your messages.

Hacker News for example is also client to server encrypted using TLS (as are most websites) but obviously our comments are still accessible in plain text.

https://telegram.org/faq#q-so-how-do-you-encrypt-data

reply

▲ jojobas 13 hours ago [–]

Neither Signal nor Telegram are federated. You can't have an organizational or private Telegram server. Your account is managed by a party you have no control over.

reply

▲ Mediterraneo10 11 hours ago [–]

Signal isn't federated because Signal tried to learn from the failure of XMPP to catch on in any meaningful way, in large part due to that federated nature. However, Signal is open source and its devs have said that anyone is perfectly free to fork it and run their own instances, as long as they remove all Signal branding and servers. In this respect, its unwillingness to allow federation does not negate it being free and libre.

reply

▲ ZoomZoomZoom 5 hours ago [–]

Oh, boy... I understand their reasons, but my relatives already annoyed by me for asking them to install Riot and then RiotX on their devices. Now I'll need to explain (which will fail and I'll end up saying "trust me") why they need to switch again!

reply

▲ geoah 5 hours ago [–]

I would assume renaming the app will be transparent to the user that already has it install. Is that not the case?

reply

▲ Arathorn 4 hours ago [–]

The plan is...

Riot iOS will be transparently renamed.

Riot Android will be transparently renamed and upgraded to be the app currently called RiotX.

RiotX will nag users to switch to using the new app (sorry :/)

Riot Desktop will be transparently renamed

Riot Web will continue to work on the existing URLs, but also exist on the new canonical URLs.

reply

▲ rglullis 13 hours ago [–]

I know nobody asked, I will suggest it anyway: *Factor*

reply

▲ Arathorn 12 hours ago [–]

we considered it, but got dismissed as a bit too techie - similar to Vector.

reply

▲ tejtm 11 hours ago [–]

vector is perfect.

"too techie" is only too techie if you are too techie otherwise it is just an appropriate name

I am very glad you are moving away from riot. makes it easier to talk about.

reply

▲ proactivesvcs 12 hours ago [–]

A subtle nod to cryptography, I love it. If not Factor, Prime? Oh, perhaps not :-)

reply

▲ ta17711771 11 hours ago [–]

Comma.ai is commandeering "prime", why not Matrix clients?!

reply

▲ eyerony 12 hours ago [–]

Factoring is the point at which *a lot* of people start truly hating math. As in going from having a weakly negative or even somewhat positive opinion of the field to *hating* it. I'd avoid the name.

reply

▲ LibertyBeta 14 hours ago [–]

I can only see this as good. MATRIX is awesome, but people don't get the connection between riot and matrix. I think of it a bit like IRC and mIRC. It lowers the bar of entry(a 9 year old could have setup mIRC when it was commonly popular) and lowers the bar of protocol discovery.

reply

▲ japaget 12 hours ago [–]

Suggested new name: Loud. With respect to colors "loud" has the same positive connotation as "riot" ("loud colors" are rich and vibrant), and it also has the connotation of making one's voice heard.

reply

▲ itronitron 13 hours ago [–]

Never heard of riot.im before. And after reading this I still don't know what it is.

reply

▲ prezjordan 11 hours ago [–]

I mean you could literally go to riot.im and see what it is

reply

▲ thatcat 13 hours ago [–]

Matrix chat client

reply

▲ fmajid 14 hours ago [–]

I hope the name they pick is distinctive enough to create confusion when googled.

reply

▲ masterfooo 11 hours ago [–]

Will this change affect the apps on mobile as in a if we have to install new apps and start all over with key verifications?

reply

▲ vladikoff 13 hours ago [–]

This is indeed good news! I am excited for a new name and hopefully more resources put into making the client better and on par or even better than Slack

reply

▲ ponsin 11 hours ago [–]

> Firstly, the biggest by far has been from a certain large games company that has consistently blocked us from being able to trademark Riot or even Riot.im

Using that logic would leave us to believe that they are changing the name "matrix" as well. After all, more than just "a big game company" will try to block you from trademarking it

reply

▲ Arathorn 11 hours ago [–]

if there was a big litigious tech company called Matrix threatening everyone who tried to use the word Matrix in their name, then yes - it might be a similar situation. luckily there doesn't seem to be one.

reply

▲ typingmonkey 14 hours ago [–]

Yes this riot matrix naming was really confusing.

reply

▲ m-p-3 14 hours ago [–]

It took a bit of searching to figure out that the selfhosted version of Matrix is labeled Matrix Synapse but I guess the name kinda make sense when you look at the idea of a federated system.

reply

▲ akerro 13 hours ago [–]

What was the name of the other P2P IM client/net that was renamed every year?

reply

▲ rrdharan 13 hours ago [–]

Are you thinking of Pidgin? It was only renamed once, so maybe you have something else in mind... https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin_(software)

reply

▲ Arathorn 12 hours ago [–]

might be SFLphone -> Ring -> Jami?

reply

▲ gdm85 9 hours ago [–]

> Secondly, we picked the name “Riot” to evoke something disruptive and vibrant - like a “riot of colour.”

Really? This reminds me of "newspeak".

reply

▲ korethr 8 hours ago [–]

It is a real usage recognized by various dictionaries (Merriam-Webster, Oxford, et. al). Doing a search will find said usage in the definition listings, and "a riot of color" seems to the typical example given by such. If I had a copy of the Shorter Oxford to hand, I'd be able to say which usage came first, and if one derived from a figurative use of the other, or if they both evolved from a common, now obsolete definition. But I don't have a copy of the Shorter Oxford to hand, so we'll just have to be happy that the definition itself is attested by various dictionaries.

reply

▲ WorldMaker 6 hours ago [–]

It's not quite the Old Oxford, but Merriam-Webster is easier to search online and seems to appear that it's a confusing mix of both. "Riot" is a Middle English borrowing from French, where it meant "public debauchery" (now considered an obsolete meaning), but even in French at the time had associations with violent debauchery. The first uses of the word in English were as a noun and for "debauchery". The first uses of riot as a verb were figuratively in the "riot of color" sense, but even then implied violence may have been part of the figurative imagery?

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/riot

reply

▲ birracerveza 14 hours ago [–]

Matrix Kerfuffle!

reply

▲ anotherevan 1 hour ago [–]

That's my favourite suggestion, but I suspect trying to type "kerfuffle" too often will make your hands seize up.

reply

▲ bouncycastle 14 hours ago [–]

Chatty McMatrixFace

reply

▲ djsumdog 11 hours ago [–]

YES! Keep Boaty afloat!

reply

▲ latrot 11 hours ago [–]

glhf refactoring and changing repo name..

reply

▲ fortran77 14 hours ago [–]

Matrix Matrix Revolution!

reply

▲ Markoff 12 hours ago [–]

Agreed, Riot is very discouraging name for any adult especially now in this climate in US, HK and other places.

Considering Telegram and Signal are taken, protocol is Matrix, Neo would sound quite modern. Neo is using Matrix protocol is quite logical conclusion.

reply

▲ computerfriend 8 hours ago [–]

Why specifically adults?

reply

zozbot234 16 hours ago [5 more]

▲ fourseventy 12 hours ago [–]

There is a company called Riot that doesnt make League of Legends?

reply

▲ ta17711771 11 hours ago [–]

No.

Also, that company is owned by China, so...

reply

▲ haolez 13 hours ago [–]

They could simply call it "Matrix", and leave the ambiguity resolution for those who care.

reply

▲ ta17711771 11 hours ago [–]

Matrix-app-%platform% and Matrix-server doesn't seem unreasonable....but yet...

reply

▲ programmarchy 11 hours ago [–]

Good move. The name has actually discouraged me from recommending the software to friends and family. People who want privacy shouldn't have to frame themselves as dissidents.

reply

▲ fhars 6 hours ago [–]

The announcement misses the best reason to change the name: squatting the namespace of an existing open source project: http://www.riot-os.org/

reply

▲ krick 9 hours ago [–]

> The new name will be announced in a few weeks once we’re ready, but we wanted to give everyone a heads up so it doesn’t come as a shock.

Uh, thanks for caring so much, but you could've just announced that when you are ready. "We are going to do something in a couple of weeks, we won't tell you what now, but we wanted to give everyone a heads up so it doesn’t come as a shock." is not very informative and sounds more like mockery.

reply

▲ SaltySolomon 8 hours ago [–]

Announcing Annoucements is all the rage right now...

reply